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Official Records

88th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 5 May 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kutesa ..... (Uganda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gunnarsson (Iceland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 129 (*continued*)

Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War

Special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I want to thank you, Mr. President, and through you, the President of the General Assembly, for convening this solemn meeting to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, upon the suggestion of the Russian Federation and with the unanimous support of the General Assembly.

This commemorative meeting requires us to collectively reflect, as Primo Levi would put it, on the human being's amazing ability to be inhumane to his or her fellow human being. Therefore, this solemn meeting must be understood not as a break with the past but as a commitment to the future. Cultivating collective memory leads us to remember the inconceivable dimensions of the greatest tragedy in modern history.

With more than 60 million deaths, tens of millions of people injured, entire cities destroyed, countries mired in misery, desolation and tragic devastation, the Holocaust is the relentless legacy of the Second World War. Upon these deaths and this destruction, our Organization was founded, as the Charter says in its preamble, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

It is therefore necessary once more to honour the memory of the victims of the War — men, women, children — and to honour those who fought for peace, without forgetting that more than half of those killed were innocent civilians. Also, from the perspective of preventive memory and emancipatory historicity, we must today condemn not only the totalitarian ideologies of the past but also the totalizing narratives of the present that, based on hatred and extreme violence, aim to spread new and old forms of bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia, as well as the angry, demeaning decision to destroy the Other simply for being the Other.

If the victims are not to have died in vain, we know that remembering, honouring and condemning is not enough. We must renew our commitment to and shared responsibility for ensuring that the ethical assurances and legal political principles enshrined in the Charter are not empty rhetoric. We must solemnly emphasize that we believe that there is no moral, ethical or political justification for war. We must solemnly reiterate our condemnation of threats or the use of force and reject war and violence as means to settle disputes or disagreements. As the philosopher of the modern State said, we must take action in uncertainty and risk. That is precisely the essence of freedom.

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We must take action because we are seeing the resurgence of military resolutions in many cases, as an illusory tool for achieving peace. We must take action because we are seeing acts of religious fanaticism in which extreme violence and acts of terrorism and hate are used to dominate, destroy, subjugate and humiliate. We must take action because we are seeing human beings treated as dispensable, as victims of trafficking and transnational organized crime networks that traffic in human beings, weapons, drugs, natural resources and cultural goods. They traffic in the present, in human dignity and in the future. We must do it because we are seeing human beings fall victim to the exclusion that shuts them out and to increasing inequalities — poverty and hunger. We must do it because we are witnessing a giant global apartheid — the drowning of thousands and thousands of human beings who as migrants want to cross the border from the hell in which they live in order to gain entry to countries that represent a paradise to them, but in which they have no place. We must take action to address the ecological catastrophes, attacks on the environment and a pseudo-culture of pillaging of the planet that seems to know no limits.

We are late. We must take action now. We cannot allow our indolence, scepticism and distrust to continue. This is not the eternal return, the monotonous repetition of history. The future is not the determinism of evil. The creed of our Organization is not that man is a wolf to man. We cannot lose any more time. Following the path of peace and achieving human rights and equality is difficult, but we must do it. The alternative to that path is what we witnessed 70 years ago and we made a promise to never again walk down that road.

We know that we have experienced frustration, but we also know that frustrating experiences can inspire and create new hopes. That is why we endeavour in our Organization to make the true hope of a more just, equal and peaceful world a reality.

Mr. Dehghani (Iran): I thank President Kutesa for organizing this special solemn meeting in commemoration of the victims of the Second World War. We have come together today to pay tribute to the memory of the brave women and men who stood up to the warmongering forces and to those who resorted to aggression and terror to spread their dark and inhumane ideology. They lost their precious lives in defending their countries, as well as their freedom and honour, in the face of an enemy that was out to subjugate peoples in Europe and well beyond to its atrocious and brutal rule. We honour the memory of millions upon millions of soldiers and civilians who perished resisting the Nazi military machine on the front lines, as well as in the war-stricken societies, owing to famine and diseases.

Being a truly global scourge, the Second World War had devastating impacts well beyond the boundaries of the belligerent forces. Victims of this ugly War were not only nationals of the Allies or the Axis Powers. Peoples of many other countries, including Iran, suffered immensely during the War. Today, as we commemorate the victims of the War, the less-known sufferings imposed on countries such as Iran deserve particular attention.

One of the less-recognized tragedies of the Second World War was the invasion and occupation of Iran during the War. This occupation had far-reaching adverse impacts on the political sovereignty and economic development of my country. It claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Iranians — members of the military and civilians alike — on the battlefield and as a result of famine and disease, and heavily damaged Iran's infrastructure.

On 4 September 1939, just three days after the beginning of the War, Iran declared its neutrality. This position was reaffirmed once again five days after the German Army attacked the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Unfortunately, this position was not respected by parties to the War. As the Nazi Army attacked the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Iran and its population became entangled in the geopolitical game of the big Powers with no due regard for the fate of the Iranian people. The so-called Persian Corridor — the Trans-Iranian Railway and road network, which could be used to get supplies to the new war fronts — became an increasingly attractive route for the Allies. Moreover, Iran by that time had already become a major producer of oil that the parties to the great War were keen to exploit and also prevent others from accessing, as it was such a valuable resource.

Following unfounded pretexts and illegal demands, the Allies invaded Iran on 25 August 1941 from the north, south and west and soon occupied the country. They grossly interfered with the political system and forced radical changes at the highest level of the Government. They thereby violated the right of Iran to remain neutral in the War and failed to respect international law in terms of honouring the sovereignty of the country and its right to self-determination. The invaders took over most significant functions of

the country. Important economic activities, such as banking and transportation, fell under their command. Furthermore, the occupying Powers seized food, fuel and other essentials, causing a widespread famine in the country that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands in the course of a couple of years. Iran was devastated through its use as an instrument for the interests of foreign Powers. For outside Powers, Iran was the bridge of victory, while to the country itself this occupation brought nothing but misery.

As Imam Ali says, taking lessons leads to the right path. And as the Spanish thinker George Santayana said, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. If we are to prevent catastrophes like the Second World War from recurring, we have to learn from them. The Second World War would not have happened if there had been a commitment on the part of all States to respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of other States, to settling all disputes by peaceful means and to refraining from the threat or the use of force in their international relations.

Iran, as a founding Member of the United Nations and one that has had the bitter experience of being invaded and occupied for several years by outside Powers on many occasions during its near and remote history, places the greatest importance on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We call upon all States to abide by their obligations under the Charter; a measure that enables us to avoid the kind of ordeal many of us experienced during the Second World War.

Mr. Aliyev (Azerbaijan): Today, on the seventieth anniversary of the end of the most horrific war in human history, we are looking back at what happened during those trying years and on what we have done recently and what we are doing now to make our planet a safer place. The Second World War brought untold sorrow to humankind. Its scope and the loss of human life and property were unprecedented. Today's meeting gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to those who fought for peace, freedom and human dignity, to commemorate the many millions of victims of the Second World War, and to remember its terrifying atrocities and destruction. The war touched all continents and peoples, sparing no one from pain and suffering.

There is not a single family in Azerbaijan that was not affected one way or another by the Second World War. Even though the hostilities took place beyond the territory of Azerbaijan, our people underwent and overcame a severe ordeal and made their contribution to the victory. Our Republic mobilized for the army more than 600,000 of its sons and daughters, half of whom sacrificed their lives. Many Azerbaijanis also fought as members of the resistance in France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia.

The victory was achieved not only on the battlefield but also at home. In a very short time frame, Azerbaijan set up works for the production of ammunition and armaments and hosted industrial enterprises relocated from the war theatre. The true heroism was the selfless service and dedication of the people of Azerbaijan, who worked day and night in oil production. During the Second World War, Baku, one of the major oil producers and suppliers, secured almost 80 per cent of all the oil extracted in the entire Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, 90 per cent of its naphtha and 96 per cent of its lubricants. Four out of five Soviet aircrafts, tanks and trucks used in the course of the Second World War ran on fuel produced in the Baku refineries from oil extracted in the Baku oil fields. In his article entitled "Glory to the Azerbaijani nation", dated 28 April 1945, Fyodor Tolbukhin, Marshal of the Soviet Union, wrote:

> "The Red Army owes the Azerbaijani nation and the courageous Baku oilmen for many victories, for on-time delivery of high-quality fuel to attacking units. Soldiers of our front under Stalingrad, in Don and Donbas, on the banks of Dnepr and Dniester, in Belgrade, under Budapest and Vienna remember the Azerbaijani oilmen with gratitude and greet the brave workers of oily Baku."

The lessons of the Second World War have remained relevant for shaping our contemporary world and for the future of international relations. The desire to save humanity from the scourge of war inspired countries to create a mechanism to maintain international peace and security — the United Nations, our Organization. This commemoration must therefore serve as an opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

It is befitting, given the goal of this special solemn meeting, to recall that in its resolution 69/267, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", the General Assembly, inter alia, calls upon the States Members of the United Nations

"to unite their efforts in dealing with challenges and threats to international peace and security, with the United Nations playing a central role, and to make every effort to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, and to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations".

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): I thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87), and I would like to add the following in my national capacity.

Today we remember the six long years of the Second World War, which brought unparalleled suffering to the human race. It was humankind's darkest hour; it was also an unforgettable era that brought out the best in us: the courage, heroism, persistence and devotion to stand our ground against all odds and not to allow evil to prevail no matter how high the price. The seventieth anniversary of the victory in the biggest war in history of the world is much more than a historical footnote; it is an opportunity to solemnly remember all those millions of men and women who perished on the battlefield, in concentration camps and dungeons, in their homes, on seas and in the air, or on some still unmarked killing grounds where people were dying even after the armistice had been signed.

Croatia was heavily struck by the Second World War, with horrible human losses. The war was merciless on us. Barely a family went through it unscratched; the wounds were deep and today, after seven decades, can still be sore. The Croatian anti-fascist legacy, gained through the war against overwhelming odds, is proudly inscribed in the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and stands as one of the pillars of the modern Croatian State. By remembering all the victims of the Second World War, their sacrifice and courage, and by remembering the atrocities and monstrosities inflicted upon them, we are preserving a historical legacy that serves as a tribute and as a warning. Some pasts must never be forgotten.

At the same time, our hearts and minds should be focused on the future. The true added value of events like today's commemoration is not to reopen old wounds or old divides, but to enable us to unite in unanimous and resolute determination not to let it happen again. In order to achieve this, we strongly support full respect for international law and the peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as the inviolability of internationally recognized borders of sovereign States.

Victory in the Second World War gave us the United Nations. The United Nations is and should remain at the forefront of the fight against totalitarianism, racism, anti-Semitism, all kinds of hatred, intolerance, human rights violations, discrimination and xenophobia, which are unfortunately still rooted in the world we live in. Only through inexhaustible and hard work to improve the present do we rightfully honour the greatest sacrifice of millions who died in the fight to make this world a more tolerant, free and peaceful place for all of humankind.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): The Second World War was indeed the gravest tragedy to occur in past centuries, as it carried away the lives of millions of innocent people. I join other speakers today in mourning all the victims who lost their lives to defeat Nazism.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87). At the same time, I would to add the following in my national capacity.

Along with other nations, the Georgian people made a tremendous sacrifice. Out of 700,000 Georgians fighting in the Second World War, 350,000 — in other words, 10 per cent of my country's population at that time, or every tenth Georgian — laid down their lives on the battlefield. Immediately after the end of the War, the civilized world translated the lessons they had learned into concrete actions by adopting the Charter of the United Nations, followed shortly thereafter by the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. These instruments were supposed to put an end to chaos and lawlessness, save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reinstate fundamental human rights and establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law could be maintained.

However, as we celebrate the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and condemn all crimes committed, our festive mood is overshadowed by the unprecedented security challenges we are facing in different parts of the world. The international system

continues to be shaken by continuous violations of fundamental principles of international law, including the use of force against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the States Members of the United Nations.

It is particularly disappointing that a founding Member of the United Nations — one that, as a permanent member of the Security Council, is supposed to be a custodian of peace — is in breach of international law and is undermining the very foundations of the United Nations Charter by annexing the territories of its neighbours, occupying 20 per cent of my country, Georgia, and conducting an aggression against sovereign Ukraine.

Hope dies last, as they say, and I do express a hope that the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War will serve as a reminder for the international community to stand firm in favour of the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and for peace and stability in the world, and that transgressors will return to the realm of international law.

Mr. Kydyrov (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): At the outset, I express our sincere gratitude for the convening of today's special solemn meeting to commemorate all the victims of the Second World War.

The Kyrgyz Republic signed on as a main sponsor of resolution 69/267, entitled "Seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War", in order to pay a deeply felt tribute of respect to all of those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the victory over Nazism and a bright future for all humankind. For the same reason, the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2004, was among the main sponsors of resolution 59/26, in which the General Assembly declared 8 and 9 May as a time of remembrance and reconciliation.

The Second World War ended 70 years ago. The historic significance of that event cannot be exaggerated. We will never be able to forget the price paid for victory in that bloody and devastating War. We will never be able to forget its victims. We will never cease mourning those who perished in the War and the Holocaust or holding in our hearts those who suffered occupation, repression, hunger and the travails of the post-War years.

The Kyrgyz Republic did everything in its power at the Second World War to cope with the consequences. For us, this war was the Great Patriotic War — a battle for our fatherland, for the people, for freedom. Every sixth inhabitant of Kyrgyzstan was at the front. More than 360,000 of the best sons and daughters of my people fought in battle; more than 100,000 died there. For their courage and heroism, thousands of fighters and commanders were awarded orders, decorations and medals, Some 21 attained the highest national rank of Cavaliers of the Order of Glory. These are not mere figures — they represent human lives, love for the fatherland, heroism and the individual tragedies of thousands of people.

Nor can we fail to note the contribution of those who worked in the shadows. More than a million of my fellow countrymen toiled in the rear, at great personal cost. The men who had gone off to the front were replaced by women, adolescents and old people. They worked in the fields and farms and in factories, thereby doing their own battle against the enemy. Accordingly, two years ago, on 25 April 2013, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, His Excellency Mr. Almazbek Atambaev, signed a decree on the preparation and carrying out of celebrations of the seventieth anniversary of the Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. As a result of this decree, an organizational committee was set up and an increase in lifelong financial support was given to those who had fought in the War.

The Kyrgyz Republic believes that the celebration of the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War must be described as a way not only of rethinking the past but also of looking towards the future. Having lived through the most massive of all wars, in which dozens of millions of people perished, the international community decided to create a world organization, the United Nations. The Organization was established, as the Charter states, with in the resolve "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Therefore, as we look back today in order to honour the memory of those who died and to pay tribute to the heroes, we also need to keep looking forward. Once again, we affirm our dedication to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. This is particularly relevant today, when millions of people throughout the world continue to be subjected to suffering as a result of the evils brought about by armed conflict. In this context, we fully support the appeal set forth in resolution 69/267 for

> "States Members of the United Nations to unite their efforts in dealing with challenges and threats to international peace and security, with the United Nations playing a central role, and to make every effort to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations, and to settle all disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations".

That is the sole way to protect present and future generations from the scourge of new wars, and it is the best thing that we can do to honour the memory of the millions of people who perished during Second World War.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Today we commemorate the solemn anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the greatest calamity that ever befell the world. The slaughter and devastation it left in its train were enormous, biblical. From the steppes of Russia and Ukraine to the vast expanses of the Pacific, from the paddies of East Asia to the dunes of North Africa and the beaches of Normandy, from the streets of Warsaw to the squares of Dresden, from the blasts of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the gas chambers of Auschwitz, from the woods and ravines of the Balkans to the killing fields of many other lands, distant and close, the Second World War epitomized the will of the freedom-loving world to live free from the scourge of war.

An important contribution to the fight against fascism and for freedom was made by my country. Some 1.7 million citizens of the former Yugoslavia lost their lives. The majority of them were Serbs. Their contribution, both in blood and money, was strategically significant to the overall Allied war effort. There were 25 enemy divisions deployed in the Balkan theatre, which had an impact on the fighting in other parts of the world. The Nazi campaigns in the Balkans delayed their operations on the Eastern Front, which had an enormous influence on the eventual outcome of the War.

Alongside the Allies, my country strove to build a just world and nations that were equal and free. Together we created the United Nations, which continues to play a central role in safeguarding peace and preventing the use of force against any country's territorial integrity and political independence. A commitment to multilateralism is consequently a pillar of Serbia's foreign policy, particularly considering its tumultuous history and the challenges it has confronted along the way. We believe, therefore, that multilateral forums such as the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are the right framework for promoting democracy and stability and achieving sustainable peace.

From its very inception, the goal of the United Nations has been to establish and maintain a stable, collective peace on the basis of agreement founded on a broad consensus among nations. It has built a system of international security based on experience gained and lessons learned. That system is comprehensive and all-inclusive. Within it, foes of yesteryear join hands to promote democracy, equality and development. Wearing blue helmets, they establish peace, saving the most precious commodity, the commodity of human life, all over the world, often in very volatile areas and very challenging circumstances.

This year Serbia is presiding over the OSCE, another international organization that arose to preserve peace in the region that saw the start of the Second World War. This gives my country an opportunity, as well as an obligation, to address serious challenges and contribute to their solution. Serbia aims to fulfil the tasks of its chairmanship by drawing on its own experience and on dialogue and better understanding and respect for the interests of all.

Nowadays we are increasingly called on to confront new challenges and threats. They include rampant terrorism, hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, violence and brutal, senseless executions that violate the very values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we have arrived at a point when for the first time in history, humankind is faced with a real possibility of extinction if measures are not taken to prevent climate change and create the conditions for sustainable development. As we march along the road to another century, we should reinforce our respect for human rights and human dignity — for people are being killed for the worst kind of reasons. Children are being kidnapped and girls and women are being brutalized and prevented from receiving an education.

Our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter should therefore continue to be firm, unyielding and strong. During the 70 years of its existence, the

United Nations and its specialized agencies have made an enormous contribution to maintaining international peace, promoting development and fighting poverty and disease. Yet we cannot be carried away by glory or fall for complacency. We must revitalize and reform our Organization in order to make it ever more effective and responsive to the tests and challenges that will shape our future, and to ensure that the human lives we are commemorating today, lost in trenches, shelters or merely wanton executions, were not sacrificed in vain.

Mr. Logar (Slovenia): I would like to thank the President for convening this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly to mark the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and to pay tribute to all the victims of the War.

Slovenia aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union (see A/69/PV.87), to which I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We are commemorating the end of the Second World War out of respect for all who were willing to sacrifice their lives for the good of freedom, peace and a life of dignity, and as a warning that we should never again allow distorted beliefs and sick ambitions to push the world into a global confrontation. It is important that we preserve the memory of the contribution and the value of each individual human affected by the ravages of the War.

The United Nations was established in order to prevent such terrible events from ever happening again. Indeed, the Preamble of the Charter of the United Nations itself emphasizes that

> "We the peoples of the United Nations [are] determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

The United Nations was founded on the basis of purposes and principles that a very large number of countries could identify with. They represent common values that over time have become unassailable. Throughout the years, the Organization's objectives and main documents have remained very relevant and continue to represent the basis for coexistence among nations, as does the Helsinki Final Act, which celebrates its seventieth anniversary this year.

During the War, the collapse of respect for human rights and human life led to shocking crimes and atrocities. When it was over, people woke up to a new world, rejoicing in peace and freedom. We should never forget the horrors of the past. Keeping in mind the lessons of history, we must remember the sacrifices that were made and mourn all those who lost their lives as victims of that terrible War.

Seventy years after the Second World War, the world has become ever more complex and uncertain. In a changing security environment, we are facing a mix of new challenges. The key international organizations that were established with a view to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security and effectively tackling all our security challenges, are finding it harder to respond effectively to today's major crises. Cognizant of our shared desire to never again face the terrible suffering and destruction that the Second World War brought to humankind, the international community should reflect on possible ways to work together in order to build trust, reaffirm our common goals and commitments and strengthen our collective decision-making capacity.

In times of numerous challenges and pressing issues, nations should come together and look for effective solutions. Never before has the world been in greater need of partnerships aimed at overcoming crises and obstacles to development. Partnerships are the obvious foundation for ensuring cooperation, building mutual trust and achieving our common goals through inclusive dialogue and harmonized action. Today's solemn occasion is therefore an opportunity to recommit to effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its heart, for peace and prosperity will come only with true cooperation, solidarity and trust.

Ms. Paik Ji-ah (Republic of Korea): I would like to join previous speakers in expressing our sadness as we remember the victims of the Second World War and in emphasizing the importance of today's solemn meeting.

After suffering the untold sorrow the War brought to humankind, the international community decided to found the United Nations, the first universal international organization in human history that aimed to institutionalize global efforts to prevent war and seek permanent peace. Today, as we honour the memory of the more than 60 million people who died during the Second World War, I would like to stress that it is our duty to maintain our vigilance against threats to international peace and security and to renew collective efforts to prevent such all-out war from ever happening again.

Today, Member States have been unanimous in emphasizing how important it is to ensure that the world does not forget the horrendous tragedies inflicted on humankind and that it is able to look back squarely at the suffering caused by global warfare. I believe that genuine recognition of and remorse over past wrongdoing is the first step towards preventing another war and securing durable peace. This year also marks the seventieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Building on our experience and lessons learned from the past seven decades, we should ensure that the Organization celebrates 70 more years of peace and prosperity. I strongly believe that, as long as we continue to cherish the principles and purposes of the United Nations, 70 years later, we will be able to say that a world with the United Nations has been better, safer and more prosperous than a world without it.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for the special solemn meeting of the General Assembly in commemoration of all victims of the Second World War.

I now call on those representatives who have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply. I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): My delegation would like to exercise its right of reply in response to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea this morning (see A/69/PV.87).

First of all, it is regrettable that a statement criticizing Japan was made given the fact that the purpose of this special solemn meeting of the General Assembly is to commemorate all the victims of the Second World War. We do not believe that this is an appropriate forum for dealing with the specific issues raised by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Throughout its post-war history, Japan has, based on feelings of deep remorse regarding the Second World War, and by upholding all the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, walked the path of a peace-loving nation that contributes to the peace and security of the world, while consistently respecting freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights. Our path as a peace-loving nation will never change. In order to comprehensively resolve the outstanding issues of concern, including abductions, nuclear and missile issues in accordance with the Japan-Democratic People's Republic of Korea Pyongyang Declaration, Japan would urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to take concrete action to comprehensively resolve these issues.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to respond to the intervention made by the representative of Japan.

The theme of today's meeting is the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War. This special solemn meeting of the General Assembly is in commemoration of all the victims of the Second World War. As I mentioned in my statement (see A/69/PV.87), the scars left by the Second World War remain unhealed in Asia because of the misdeeds of the Japanese authorities, and this is a very proper occasion and forum to take up the issue of the crimes committed by Japan during the Second World War.

As my delegation has stated very clearly, Japan is described as an enemy State and a defeated State that committed unimaginable crimes against Asian peoples, yet to date has offered no recognition, apology or reparations for its crimes in a clearly convincing manner. Everyone in this forum may have noted the recent visit by Premier Abe to Washington, D.C., and how he acted during his visit. The representative of Japan also mentioned the Pyongyang Declaration. This declaration has not yet been implemented because of the two-faced attitude and the very sinister purpose and goal pursued by the Japanese authorities, which is to cover up its past crimes forever while pursuing various kinds of actions and deeds.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): I apologize for taking the floor again, but my delegation is obliged to exercise its right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

I shall refrain from entering into a detailed rebuttal of the statement made by the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, since the Japanese position is already clear from my previous statement. Unfortunately, we still witness unceasing armed conflicts among States even after the Second World War. It is also regrettable that there are still infringements of human rights and violations of humanitarian law in some countries.

Mr. An Myong Hun (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I want to make one point very clear to Japan. Japan must make a political decision to liquidate its past crimes. A liquidation of the past should include totally extinguishing the ambition to revive the militarism still alive in the mind of Japan. This cannot be left over to the future any longer. Japan's past crimes cannot be equivocated nor diluted or forgotten. The criminal history of Japan can never be covered up or erased. My delegation strongly urges Japan once again to make full and clear recognition, apology and reparations for its past crimes.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.